district and Uttara Kannada district. One of the arrested persons, Nasir is reported to have been trained in Pakistan and had connections with Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT). Some of the others, who had attended the meetings, are reported to be members of the banned organisation SIMI. Further investigations are continuing.

Molestation by IAF Officers

*188. SHRI HARISH RAWAT:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that three Indian Air force officers were charged with molesting a girl aboard the New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express in December, 2007; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and what action has been taken by the Air Force against such officers?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Three airmen of the Indian Air Force (IAF), were arrested by the Government Railway Police (GRP) Gomoh on the written complaint made by a lady co-passenger on 27.12.2007, for misbehaviour while they were travelling by Delhi-Bhubaneswer Rajdhani train. A case againt all the three was registered u/s 354/34 IPC and is being investigated by GRP Gomoh. The next hearing by Judicial Magistrate (Railway) Dhanbad is on 3rd April, 2008. The airmen have been released on bail on 28.12.2007.

In a formal investigation, conducted by Air Force Station Kalaikunda in January 2008, one airman has been blamed for improper behaviour with the lady co-passenger. All three have been blamed for not reporting the matter to Air Force authorities in time about the said incident. After approval by competent authority, it is proposed to take action against the balmed airmen, for the lapses established. If the airmen are subsequently convicted by the Criminal Court further appropriate action will also be taken accordignly under the Air Force Laws.

Employment under NREGP

*189. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) happens to be world's biggest and ambitious social security scheme;

(b) if so, the number of unemployed got employment since its enactment in September, 2005;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Act is meant for improving working conditions and bringing about investments in productive assets; and

(d) if so, what action has been taken on the above?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. NREGA happens to be the world's biggest and ambitious Act that provides a legal guarantee for 100 days of wage employment in a year to every rural household on demand. It is aimed at enhancement of the livelihood security of the rural people.

(b) NREGA is open to all rural households who demand work irrespective of their employment status. NREGA was enacted in September, 2005. The Act was, however, launched in 200 select districts in the States with effect from 2.2.2006. The basic unit under NREGA is "household". During the year 2006-07, a total of 2.10 crore households had been provided employment under the Act in 200 districts. During the current financial year, (up to mid-February, 2008), a total of 2.93 crore households in 330 districts have been provided employment.

(c) and (d) The Act is meant to provide wage employment to rural households that demand employment and are willing to do unskilled manual work. The workers are entitled to receive wages earned within 15 days of work done. In addition, NREGA provides for workers entitlements during the course of work. These include medical treatment (including hospitalization) at Government cost for injured workers for the injury acquired while working, *ex-gratia* payment to the legal heirs of the deceased or permanently disabled workers by accident arising out of and in the course of employment, safe drinking water, shade for children and periods of rest, first aid box and creche facility for children below 6 years of age of the female NREGA workers. The act also aims at creating durable assets and strengthening the livelihood resource base of the rural poor. The choice of works suggested in the Act address causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation, soil erosion, so that the process of employment generation is on a sustainable basis. During the year 2006-07, a total of 830938 works had been taken up out of which 383491 works were completed during the year and the remaining 447447 works were in progress. During the current year, (up to January, 2008), 1370690 works have been taken up. Out of these, 427531 works have been completed and 943159 works are in progress. Break up of the works taken up under NREGA along with the benefits created during the year 2006-07 and 2007-08 (up to January, 2008) are given in the Statement - I and II.

Statement-I

Break-up of the works taken up and the assets created under NREGA (Financial year) 2006-07

Type of Work	Total works taken (no.)	Works Completed (no.)	Ongoing Works (no.)	Benefit Created (in lakhs)
Water Conservation and Water Harvesting (CU.MT.)	266365	121921	144444	737
Flood Control and Protection (KM)	17113	10206	6907	3
Micro Irrigation Works (KM)	27682	12151	15531	0.13
Provision of Irrigation facility to Land Owned by SC/ST (HECTARE)	80794	27362	53432	0.16
Renovation of Traditional Water bodies (CU.MT.)	59924	25472	34452	481
Land Development (HECTARE)	88557	43370	45187	3 35
Drought Proofing (HECTARE)	77305	30989	46316	3.45
Rural Connectivity (KM)	179661	91244	88417	2.37
Any Other activity	33537	20776	12761	
	830938	383491	447447	

Statement-II

Break-up of the works taken up and the assets created under NREGA (Financial year) 2007-08 *upto Jan.*, 2008

Type of Work	Total works taken (no.)	Works Completed (no.)	Ongoing Works (no.)	Benefit Created (in lakhs)
Water Conservation and Water Harvesting (CU.MT.)	370191	106999	263192	1023.58
Flood Control and Protection (KM)	33757	13959	19798	5.13
Micro Irrigation Works (KM)	63658	17725	45933	0.32
Provision of Irrigation facility to Land Owned by SC/ST (HECTARE)	196213	49716	146497	0 49
Renovation of Traditional Water bodies (CU.MT.)	102595	32840	69755	823 51
Land Development (HECTARE)	206176	59743	146433	7.80
Drought Proofing (HECTARE)	118601	34467	84134	5.81
Rural Connectivity (KM)	234340	90616	143724	3.09
Any Other activity	45159	21466	23693	
	1370690	427531	943159	

Credit cards to craftsmen and weavers

†*190. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any plan to give credit cards to craftsmen and weavers under Self-Employment Scheme, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the number of craftsmen and weavers issued credit cards so far, State-wise; and

(c) whether, keeping in view the economic plight of craftsmen and weavers, the economic assistance or facilities being provided to them?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) There is no scheme in the name of Self Employment Scheme for craftsmen and weavers. However, for handicraft artisans a scheme Artisan Credit Card (ACC) is being implemented to facilitate credit flow to handicraft artisans. Further, with an objective to alleviate the problem of collateral security or 3rd party guarantee and to remove impediments to flow of credit to handicrafts sector, Credit Guarantee Scheme is being implemented. Under this scheme, the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Small Industries (CGTSI) provide guarantee to its Member Lending Institutions (Banks) in respect of credit extended to handicraft artisans. The Government of India bears the cost of guarantee fee and annual service charges in this regard.

(b) The number of handicraft artisans benefited under ACC, as reported by banks in the country, is 1,04,066 so far. State-wise figures for the same are not maintained by the Banks.

(c) As regards Handicraft Sector, economic assistance is being provided for development of Handicraft Sector through implementing various schemes which include: Baba Saheb

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi